THESE KIDS RAISE PUPPIES
FOR THE BLIND

Merrill Pollack

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AMERICAN PRINTING
HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

SATURDAY EVENING POST, V.227, No. 4, JULY 24, 1954

Ever see a kid who would part with his dog? There are more than 500 of them in New Jersey, who act as temporary masters for pups destined to guide the blind. It's a happy arrangement—the puppies learn to live with people, and the youngsters get a new pet every year!

THESE KIDS RAISE PUPPIES FOR THE BLIND

HV1709
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By MERRILL POLLACK

IF a typical parent were approached by a stranger who said, "I'd like your child to raise a puppy for me; then give it back when it is grown," the parent would probably react unenthusiastically. It's fairly certain that his resistance would increase considerably if he heard the rest of the proposal: "You'll get some money toward the dog's keep, but it won't cover the cost of any slippers or rugs that may get chewed up. I'll expect you and your child to lavish love and care on the puppy, treat it as a member of the family. Then, at the end of a year or so, I'll come to take the dog away, and you'll probably never see it again. If your child does a good job of raising this dog, I'll let him raise another one for me."

While nobody actually goes around ringing doorbells with this request, more than 1075 puppies have been raised under approximately these conditions in New Jersey during the last dozen years. Over 550 youngsters have taken these temporary pets, so far. Practically all of them asked for the privilege of caring for the dogs and, surprisingly, only a handful of them gave any indications of unhappiness when their dogs were taken away.

Some of the participants, like seventeen-year-old Carolyn Litts and her eighteen-year-old sister,

A Seeing Eye dog and her 10-day-old litter. When the pups are 10 weeks old they go to 4-H homes.

Marlene, of Johnsonburg, New Jersey, found the idea of swapping grown dogs for puppies so much to their liking that they became puppy raisers of formidable proportions. Since 1946 the girls have cared for a total of twenty-four dogs. Other youngsters are crowding this record.

In a few cases, raising these puppies has become a family tradition. When a youngster goes away to school, say, or reaches twenty-one, the top age limit for participation, he can no longer take puppies. Bob Armstrong, III, of Augusta, New Jersey, raised four dogs before starting his agriculture studies at Rutgers University. His sister, Ellen, then took over. In the next four years she cared for eight dogs. Then she, too, went away to school—to the New Jersey College for Women. To her twelve-year-old brother, Hugh, the house seemed awfully quiet without any puppies. He signed up for a dog of his own. In February, 1954, he received a German-shepherd puppy.

Obviously, some fairly potent factors must be present to induce a young person to give up a dog he has enjoyed for a year or more and accept in return a brand-new puppy. The explanation is twofold: The youngsters, members of 4-H, a national organization of some 2,000,000 boys and girls in rural areas, take seriously the National 4-H-club pledge: "I pledge my head to clearer thinking, my heart to greater loyalty, my hands to larger service and my health to better living, for my club, my community and my country." The puppies they accept belong to The Seeing Eye, Inc., of Morristown, New Jersey. The youngsters raise them as an official 4-H project under Seeing Eye supervision. When the dogs reach maturity they are (Continued on Page 92)

PHOTOGRAPHY BY IVAN DMITRI

Seeing Eye's head trainer Debetaz and director Werntz on the school's grounds at Whippany, N.J.

Student James Connell solos with his German shepherd, Nola, in downtown Morristown. Since 1942 New Jersey 4-H members have raised over 1000 dogs that are now serving as "eyes" for the blind.

"No, my dearest," said de Gradoff tenderly. "You're not turning against me. That I couldn't bear."

"You mean, can I prove he killed her?" she asked then, calmly. "The answer is no, Mr. Finlay. The same as I told the French dick when he was beating about the bush also. She took an overdose of sleeping pills and died. She was in Paris. Nikki was in a hotel near Dijon. He had a lady with him to prove it; also the hotel manager and staff. Being French, the police assumed an affair of gallantry. When Nikki admitted he'd wanted a divorce, they took the rest of it for granted, till her family stepped in. The body was exhumed and showed nothing. And that was that. Or was it?"

She hesitated an instant, turned her head, looking Tony's back room over carefully before she turned back and leaned toward him.

"I've never told anybody this. It was the darnedest thing that ever happened to me. I'm still not over it." She glanced around again. The tables near them were empty. "I was sent out to interview him right after the funeral. There was a rumor that the rake had reformed and was going to seal up the house with himself in it—something bizarre. I went out to his home. He let me in and got me a drink. The servants were all busy, he said. We were in her little writing room. We settled down for a heart-to-heart chat about life and love and the folly of it all. And I still don't know what happened."

She shivered a little and took another drink.

ILLUSTRATED BY EDWIN GEORGI

"He was talking. Could any pure woman ever love him again? How had he ever dreamed of divorcing an angel of light? I was a woman. Did I think he was a monster? All that tripe, and I was ready with a touching reply of the same, when all of a sudden I heard myself telling him the truth. I was saying I'd always thought he was one of the most scheming, coldest, most utterly ruthless —— I stopped before I said 'swine.'"

Polly Randolph closed her eyes, shuddering.

"It was just as if somebody else—or something else—was using my tongue, saying things I'd never even thought. I hardly knew the man. It was the atmosphere of the place—something. He had all her letters and stuff out, (Continued on Page 85)

At the home of Dr. DeWitt Smith outside Princeton, Seeing Eye man Bob Curtis discusses the 4-H puppy project with the Smith youngsters and friends.

Many of the Seeing Eye dogs come from the school's own kennels. John Weagley, head of the breeding program, weighs in a three-week-old German shepherd.

Curtis makes a swap with Dorrie and Susan Minis. He's taking Karen (left) away for guide training, leaving Donna in her place.

POST SCRIPTS

Success Ruined Me

A FEW years ago I was a happy man, plagued with bills, sure, but contented. I wheeled my cart merrily about the supermarket, exchanging oaths about the prices with close and dear friends. My children nibbled happily on crusts of toast. My wife was satisfied with an old horse-powered washing machine. We all rode bicycles and we made our own gay rugs out of wet paper.

Then suddenly prosperity hit me. I went into a small foundation-garment business. Orders began to pour in. I don't know why. Possibly our garment, which fitted loosely, was more comfortable than most. We built them along the idea of the sloppy-Joe sweater, nice and baggy and easy to slip into if the doorbell rang.

Anyway, I made millions. Everything changed. My wife began demanding help. I had to go outside for someone to fix the roof or the boiler. My children were no longer little contented, bright-eyed innocents. They wanted shoes and stockings and all sorts of frivolous items. I, myself, fell into the lap of luxury. I stopped cutting my own hair, an art I had mastered over the course of ten years. The bicycle wasn't good enough for me. I bought a luxurious motorcycle, secondhand. I got another wheel somewhere and fixed it up swell.

Our home became a show place. We put paper on the walls and fixed the holes in the windows. We had stairs installed, so that we wouldn't have to shinny up a pole to the second floor. We began sleeping in beds.

We forsook the wood range and put in a modern coal burner. All about us was elegance and decadence. We no longer talked to each other. We were too busy with our new toys. My wife began going to movies every week. My children took up wild square dancing. Even I had an electric clock installed. I had become too lazy to wind!

My wife and I drifted apart. My children seldom spoke to me except to ask for money. I was deluged with new friends who wanted, poor deluded fools, to be as successful as I.

At last I could stand it no longer. I gave my business to my employees. I buried all my money in an abandoned well. I threw out all my luxuries and tore down my home.

Now we are a family again, living comfortably in a cave on what I make as a cake decorator. We have no elegance, no luxury, no fancy clothes, but we have something more important than that—our peace of mind. At least until the bear comes back for his cave.

—ROBERT FONTAINE.

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

"Of course, that's just the first coat."

Consider the Ostrich

The female ostrich and the male divide egg-sitting duties; she sits by day, he by night.
—*News item.*

THE female ostrich
and the male,
As it is very fitting,
Lest harmony should
not prevail
Divide the baby-sitting.

Between the two, the
eggs are warm
In any sort of weather,
And shielded well from
lurking harm
By beak and claw and
feather.

What's more, she sits by
day, you see
And, as it's only right,
Gives him the evening shift so she
Knows where he is at night.

—RICHARD ARMOUR.

Now You Know

This seems as good a time as any to answer various questions that have been put to me in circularized mail advertisements.

Q.: Have you often wondered what it would be like to own a complete two-volume unexpurgated history of the fascinating queens of the Third Hamrubian Dynasty, their secret loves, their intrigues, the weird exotic rites they practiced?

A.: I gave it a bit of thought around 1925 or '26, but I got over it.

Q.: Does your house need reroofing?

A.: Nope, but my roof could stand rehousing, come to think of it.

Q.: If the end of the world came tomorrow, would you be prepared?

A.: I think I could handle it as well as most.

Q.: How many times have you wished your income were higher?

A.: I lost count long ago.

Q.: Would you like to grow all the strawberries you and your entire family can eat on a plot only ten feet square?

A.: Ever hear of something called strawberry rash?

Q.: How would you like to take as much as thirty or forty pounds off your weight in only two months and with no sacrifice on your part?

A.: I'm six feet tall and weigh 133 soaking wet. Draw your own conclusions.

Q.: Can you discuss intelligently the gold standard, the North Atlantic Treaty or modern trends in atonal music?

A.: Not particularly, but you ought to hear me when I get going on the Ted Williams shift.

Q.: Are you able to give your children everything they deserve?

A.: I sure was yesterday when our hall mirror got smashed.

—PARKE CUMMINGS.

There are Two Sides to Every Family, and Guess Who Can't Win

Now, whom do little girls
Get dimples and golden curls
From?
Mom.

From whom do they inherit
Freckles and a carrot-
Top?
Pop!

—GEORGIE STARBUCK GALBRAITH.

"Catchy tune, isn't it?"

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

Large Lord Fauntleroy

AFFLICTED as I am with a silhouette resembling a Bartlett pear, I have trouble acquiring a passable set of threads. During the war years, when yard goods were in short supply, clerks would look the other way whenever I entered a clothing store. At a hidden signal, several husky stock boys would deflect me into the Stylish Stouts, a gloomy enterprise located to the rear of the Mackinaws and motorcycle helmets.

Eventually the firm's oldest employee emerged from his web, circled me carefully and remarked with great sadness, "I had hoped there would be some change in the seat since the last time."

"Chin up," I replied. "What do you have in a salt-and-pepper with outside ticket pocket?"

"You never go any place," he replied peevishly, whipping a garment from the rack. "Ticket pockets cost money. Let's try this for bulk."

Gradually over the past few years a number of changes have taken place in the sales approach to the outsize customer. Yesterday as I emerged from the elevator for my biyearly draping, a crisp young man snapped to attention at my elbow. He wore a checked vest, a beginner's mustache and a fraternity pin set with pearls as large as roc's eggs.

With a flourish, he led me into a paneled subdivision tastefully hung with English hunting prints. Spaced about the room I observed other stylish stouts imbedded up to their Plimsoll lines in the deep leather chairs.

"Here, sir," he said politely, "you may be among your own. Please be seated and we'll block out your needs."

I had hardly settled back when he appeared bearing several garments. "First, I would like to acquaint you with the miracles science has wrought anent the new fabrics. This silky piece, for instance, is composed of air, water, potter's clay and a type of lint found only under Swiss feather beds. Real gone, wouldn't you say, sir?"

"Any chance of it falling apart?" I asked.

He gave an amused smile. "None whatsoever. This cloth has an almost frightening life expectancy. The bolt comes in thirty-two decorator's colors including flame, game, barberry, horse, gorse and heather." He lowered his voice, "And just between us, sir, you'd be a ball of fire in our periwinkle."

To my surprise, this proved to be an astonishingly accurate prediction. As I posed before the triple mirror I could observe envious looks from the other customers. One individual, a Forty-six Short, threw in my direction a glance of sheer hatred.

It was a pleasant illusion and lasted until I appeared before my wife for the first time. She gave a gasp which I took to be a cry of suppressed joy.

"Smooth, isn't it?" I asked. "And I'll bet you couldn't guess the color."

"Oh, yes," she said, "I've already guessed that."

"What?" I asked, preening from left to right.

"Butterball blue," she said with a sigh.

—DICK ASHBAUGH.

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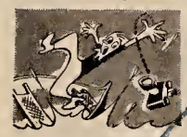

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THESE KIDS RAISE PUPPIES FOR THE BLIND

(Continued from Page 36)

destined to be trained as dog guides for blind people. At any given time there are more than 125 of these puppies boarding at the homes of 4-H members. The dog project is a popular one, and the number of 4-H applicants always exceeds the number of available dogs.

Eighteen-year-old Bob Vickery, of Sussex County, like most of the 4-H members, has a lot of fun raising dogs and takes a matter-of-fact attitude toward giving them up. He has raised five puppies so far, and he admits to having got emotional only when he had to part with the first one. "After all," he reasons, "the dogs are given up for a good cause. That makes it easier to take. Besides, look at all the different dogs I get to meet this way."

His sixteen-year-old sister, Betty, and his mother, Mrs. Emerson Vickery, are less stoical about saying good-by to the dogs. Once Betty, her mother and a woman neighbor all burst into tears when a Seeing Eye man came to collect one of their dogs. The Seeing Eye man almost started crying himself. And, he swears, when he looked at the dog there were tears in its eyes too.

Although she's just finished raising her fifth puppy, Betty still gets the blues whenever one of her dogs is collected, and Mrs. Vickery has herself a good cry. They recover quickly. A new puppy has been dropped off and it needs attention. And puppies are beguiling creatures.

On rare occasions even the knowledge that the dogs will eventually give independence and mobility to the blind is not enough to soften the unhappiness some 4-H'ers feel when their dogs leave. A sixteen-year-old girl and her parents in Middlesex County put on brave fronts whenever one of their dogs was collected, but it was obvious that they were taking a bad emotional licking. This was all wrong as far as Seeing Eye was concerned; the project is not designed to make people miserable. Finally, after a long discussion with Seeing Eye, the family agreed that it would be sensible for them to stop raising dogs they couldn't keep.

Seeing Eye acquires some of its puppies through purchase or donation; the remainder come from the school's own breeding kennels. More than two thirds of the dogs are German shepherds; other breeds which have been used successfully are boxers, Labrador retrievers, a few elkhounds, Huskies and some mixed breeds. It is not for lack of kennel space at the Seeing Eye school that the dogs are boarded out. Until the dogs are a little over a year old and ready to start learning their guide duties, they are placed in 4-H homes to get experience in living with people.

A dog fresh out of a kennel is unfamiliar with normal household conversation, baby noises, the sounds of radios, phonographs, typewriters, automobile engines. It hasn't had a chance to learn how to walk across a slippery linoleum-covered floor or how to walk up and down a flight of stairs. The dogs get this orientation at 4-H homes. A healthy dog that has had good experiences at its "foster" home is likely to be emotionally secure and will learn its guide work easily. The great majority of dogs that are returned from 4-H homes to the school do work out well.

The Seeing Eye representative who is responsible for distributing the puppies and reclaiming them is Bob Curtis, a compactly built, thirty-one-year-old native of Massachusetts who has considerable knowledge of dogs. A large part of his work consists of looking after the health of the puppies while they are boarding out and making sure they get veterinary care whenever it is needed. In pursuit of his duties he drives an average of 2000 miles a month over a large portion of rural New Jersey. In addition to having a strong affection for dogs, he derives immense pleasure from talking to people, and, as he perambulates around the state, he does valuable service as an unofficial good-will ambassador for Seeing Eye.

On a cold morning last January, to illustrate, Curtis reported for work at 8:30 and collected from the school's kennels at Morristown a ten-month-old German shepherd named Denise. He put her in one of the four dog cages in his green panel truck, then drove thirteen miles southward to an isolated mountaintop where Seeing Eye's breeding kennels are located. There, John Weagley, head of the breeding division, gave him three tins of a mineral-vitamin supplement, three jars of cod-liver oil, three cases of puppy food and three German-shepherd litter sisters—Audrey, Adora and Adella—ten weeks old and still small enough to look like fuzz balls. Weagley also gave Curtis a medical-history card of each puppy. Wherever Curtis placed the puppies he would leave food, vitamins and a record card.

For five minutes after Curtis started driving again, the puppies yelped and whined. He talked to them soothingly—"Yes, that's all right, pups, don't you worry now. Easy does it."—until they became quiet. His first destination was the home of 4-H'er Pamela Kydd, a twelve-year-old who lives outside Pottersville. He was returning Denise, who had been boarded at Morristown while she was in heat. The Kydds own two golden retrievers, one of them a male, and they had no facilities for keeping Denise isolated during her season. Near Pamela's house, Curtis spotted Mrs. Kydd driving her car in the opposite direction. He tooted his horn and she stopped. Nobody was home, she said, but go on up and leave Denise in the house. "Pam will be delighted to have her back," she said. "In fact, we've all missed her."

After depositing Denise, Curtis drove south to Belle Mead, below Somerville. He stopped at the 130-acre dairy farm operated by Mr. and Mrs. Siegbert Schoenthal, who came to the United States in 1939, after they'd been forced out of Germany by the Nazis. The Schoenthals have four children—Nonne, now in the United States Army, and Foli, Gerhart and Dinah, all of whom belong to 4-H. Foli, a slim eighteen-year-old with brown eyes and brown hair, had been caring for her first Seeing Eye puppy, a male shepherd named Fred who was now ready to be taken back.

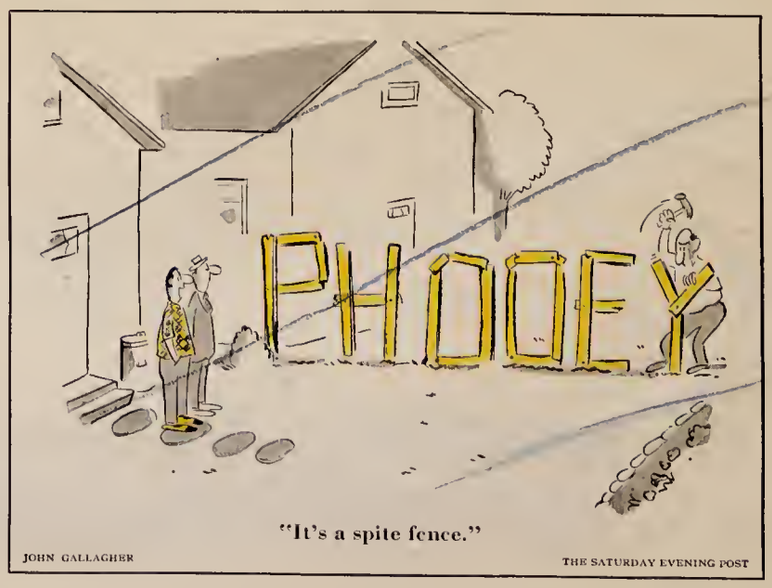
When Curtis parked his car, Mrs. Schoenthal came out of the barn, calling, "Fred knows that something is wrong. All morning long he was running back and forth in the house. We didn't dare let him out, for fear he'd run off." Curtis grinned, took Audrey out of her cage and held her up. "Isn't that the cutest little pup you ever saw?" he said. Mrs. Schoenthal beamed and took the dog.

In the house, Fred inspected the puppy curiously. Audrey ignored him and started to sniff the furniture. A few minutes later Mr. Schoenthal and Foli entered. With an enthusiastic, "Where's my dog?" Foli scooped Audrey off the floor and proceeded to make friends with her. After several minutes of discussion about Audrey, Mr. Schoenthal asked Curtis what he thought of Fred.

"He looks wonderful," Curtis answered, "but he sure has grown, hasn't he?" Mrs. Schoenthal found a ruler, and Curtis measured Fred's shoulder height. He straightened, looking a trifle unhappy. "He's twenty-six and one half inches. A blind person would have a lot of trouble tucking him under a subway seat or squeezing him into a crowded bus. I'm afraid he's a little too big for guide work. Maybe we'll have to find another job for Fred. I'll let you know."

The family followed Curtis as he led Fred outside. When Curtis was near his car he said impulsively, "Would you like a picture of yourselves with the two dogs?" They assented eagerly. Curtis took a box camera out of the car and snapped a picture. After promising to send them a print, he put Fred in one of the cages and waved good-by.

Curtis stopped next at a neighboring farm, where fourteen-year-old John Johnson and his sixteen-year-old sister, Sarah, had raised three shepherds. The third dog had been collected a week earlier and Curtis wanted to leave a new puppy. Mr. Johnson, a lanky man with weather-tanned skin, was alone. The children were at school. Mrs. John-



"It's a spite fence."

JOHN GALLAGHER — THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

How many of these people need a doctor?

All of them!

Most of them are feeling fine and want to stay that way. And that's exactly why they need a doctor. For the surest way to *stay* healthy is to get in the habit of consulting a doctor regularly.

A prompt report to your doctor of any real change in your physical condition may allow him to halt a disease before it becomes serious. A regular medical check-up may detect some illness before you are aware of it.

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And in treating and consulting with you through the years, your doctor builds valuable records on your physical assets and liabilities. He gets to know your emotional make-up. He can do more for you when he has an intimate understanding of you as a person.

Through your doctor you can take advantage of the vast resources of medical science and recent advances in treatment of many conditions.

Perhaps, at the moment, you don't have a family physician. If not, start making inquiries *now*—don't wait for an emergency to force you into a frantic search for a doctor.

You may wish to consider several doctors before you pick the one who is "right" for you. Once you have made your selection, give him your complete confidence, as you would any other trusted member of your family circle. Remember, your doctor is the best "preventive medicine" your family can have.

PARKE, DAVIS & COMPANY

Research and Manufacturing Laboratories Detroit 32, Michigan

One of a series of messages on the importance of prompt and proper medical care, published by Parke, Davis & Company—makers of medicines prescribed by physicians and dispensed by pharmacists.

son, who drives the local school bus, wouldn't be home until two o'clock, and she wanted to be there to greet the puppy. She would have to leave at twenty minutes after two, though. Could Curtis come back then?

Curtis agreed cheerfully and hurried north to Somerville, to the fifteen-acre farm where ten-year-old David Alter lives. David had had one puppy, Samara. At the age of ten months she had developed a liver ailment so debilitating that she had to be put away. David had asked for another puppy.

Mrs. Alter and David, a round-faced blond with blue eyes, and freckles on his nose, were waiting. After talking to them about Samara, Curtis said, "Now, let's get on to more cheerful things. I've got a really swell pup out in the car, David. Do you want to see her?" Too excited to speak, David nodded vigorously.

Curtis returned a few moments later with Adella and her provisions. He gave Mrs. Alter and David a quick review in how to use the vitamin supplement. Periodically, David glanced at the puppy and a grin stole over his face. Finally, there was a question about the puppy's name. Mrs. Alter thought Adelia would be a prettier name than Adella. For identification purposes, whenever a litter is born at Seeing Eye's breeding kennels, all the puppies in that litter are given names starting with the same letter of the alphabet. Adelia was acceptable, since the first letter of her name hadn't changed. Before leaving, Curtis told David to fill in his 4-H report on Samara. He would get credit for completing the project, since the dog's illness and subsequent death had been beyond his control. As Curtis drove away, David emerged from the house, proudly taking Adelia for her first walk.

Curtis got back to the Johnson farm at two o'clock and carried the remaining puppy, Adora, into the kitchen. Adora made a tour of the room, found a piece of coal near the coal scuttle and started to chew on it.

"Makin' herself right at home, isn't she?" Mr. Johnson said.

"I think the children will like her," Mrs. Johnson decided.

Curtis looked pleased. "I hope so," he said. "They've done a really fine job for Seeing Eye with their other dogs."

From the Johnson home, Curtis drove to Princeton, where, at 2:30 P.M., after making sure that Fred was still all right in the truck, he stopped for lunch. Later he went to the 209-acre farm of Mr. and Mrs. Philip Minis, just outside the town. Two spirited shepherds, Koko and Karen, came bounding noisily across the lawn to inspect him. He rubbed their heads and calmed them and greeted Mrs. Minis. Mr. Minis is a script editor for CBS-TV and he does not do any large-scale farming. He keeps a few chickens and ducks and some livestock, and rents out some of his pastures. The Minises have three children—Dorrie, thirteen; Susan, eleven; and Philip, Jr., eight. Dorrie was raising Koko, her third dog, and Susan was caring for Karen, her second Seeing Eye pup. Philip intends to ask for a dog, too, as soon as he reaches the age of ten and is eligible to join 4-H.

A family living across the road had told Mrs. Minis that their own dog was sick with encephalitis, a phase of distemper which affects the dog's nervous system. Encephalitis is contagious, and Mrs. Minis had telephoned Seeing Eye. Although the dogs had been inoculated for distemper, Curtis wanted to examine the dogs and make sure they got booster shots. They were both in excellent health.

It was six o'clock before Curtis got back to Morristown. John Weagley, who would make the decision about Fred, wouldn't be available until morning. Curtis drove to the home of one of several veterinarians in the Morristown area who serve Seeing Eye, and left Fred overnight. From there he went home.

Weagley inspected Fred the next morning. Because of Fred's excellent temperament, even though he was a little large for guide work, it was decided to keep him for special breeding needs in the future.

(As this article went to press, Seeing Eye reported that the puppies Audrey and Adora were making good progress in their 4-H homes. David Alter's pup, Adelia, had to be rejected because of a temperament not suited for guide work, and David has since taken a new dog, Laurie. Also, Dorrie and Susan Minis have returned their two shepherds. Koko is being used in the breeding program and Karen has been assigned to a blind woman. Dorrie has a new pup to care for, a six-month-old female German shepherd named Donna.)

The roots of Seeing Eye go back to 1927, when The Saturday Evening Post published an article called The Seeing Eye, a description of a school in Potsdam, Germany, where German shepherds were being trained as guides for war-blinded German veterans. The author was a Philadelphian, Mrs. Dorothy Harrison Eustis, then living at Vevey, Switzerland. With her husband and a former cattle breeder named Elliot (Jack) Humphrey, she was doing researches into the intelligence and work capacities of shepherds. As part of her studies, Mrs. Eustis maintained breeding kennels and trained dogs to work with the Swiss police and border patrols.

Her article in the Post was read to Morris Frank, a blind nineteen-year-old insurance salesman of Nashville, Tennessee. He wrote to Mrs. Eustis, wanting to know where he could get a dog guide and what he could do to help start a similar school in the United States. Mrs. Eustis offered to try to train a dog for Frank if he'd come to Switzerland. Late in April, 1928, Morris Frank arrived at Vevey. After a five-week course with his already trained dog guide, Buddy, he returned to the United States in early June. Before Mrs. Eustis and the others could think about starting a school for dog guides, it had to be proved that a blind man relying solely on a dog could safely navigate through heavy American traffic. Late that month, after testing Buddy in the busiest intersections of several Eastern cities, Frank sent Mrs. Eustis a one-word cable: SUCCESS.

Seeing Eye was founded in the following year. There have been some changes in the staff, naturally. Mrs. Eustis died in 1946. Jack Humphrey, who left the school during World War II to train war dogs, is now out West raising cattle. Willi Ebeling, who had been business manager since 1929, retired in 1953. Morris Frank, now using Buddy III, is still with the school, as a vice-president.

Since its start, Seeing Eye has graduated more than 2900 dog guides at its headquarters at Whippany, just outside Morristown, New Jersey. These dogs have been paired with over 2100 blind people, some of whom have returned to the school for their second, and even third, guides. According to George Werntz, Jr., executive director

What's your preference?

Some smokers like a full bent. Others prefer a billiard shape. Whatever your favorite pipe, one of these fine tobaccos is sure to fill it to your taste.

If you like a "straight" Burley tobacco, choose Model—it's a cool, slow-burning smoke. It's a blend of fine Burleys in a new, big, convenient pouch.

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of the school, the demand for these dogs is more limited than the public generally supposes. "Not all blind people want dogs," he says, "and physical disabilities and handicaps other than blindness make it unwise for many to endeavor to use them. Also, since we regard the dogs as instruments of rehabilitation, we must consider such factors as an applicant's willingness to seek employment following graduation." Each Seeing Eye student agrees to pay $150 toward the cost of his dog and of his room and board while in training. Subsequent dogs cost fifty dollars. The school feels that a student's willingness to accept this financial obligation is his first step toward personal independence.

Werntz says that the amount paid by a student is not one tenth the cost of producing a trained dog. The difference is made up in contributions from some 21,000 supporting members all over the United States. The cost per dog comes out high because of the complex activities carried out at the school and the intensive follow-up checking the school does after a student graduates. Seeing Eye is a school for dogs, for blind people and for instructors. It takes three months to train a dog for guide work, another month to teach the dog and its future master to work together. It takes from three to five years for a man to qualify as a full-fledged instructor. Although he can learn the training routine quickly, the trainer needs all this time in order to get enough experience to handle a wide variety of dogs and people. At present, G. William Debetaz, vice-president in charge of training, who has been with Seeing Eye since shortly after it started, has a staff of nine trainers.

Until late 1941, Seeing Eye kept all of its dogs in its own kennels. The school had lost many of its staff to the draft, and Jack Humphrey, then head of the training division, was worried because his dogs weren't getting the attention they needed. In addition, a distemper epidemic had ravaged the school's kennels. In November Humphrey, in a chat with A. Howard Saxe, Morris County's agricultural agent, mentioned that he was looking for farms where he could board his dogs.

Saxe said he'd see what he could do to help. He discussed the problem with James (Bob) Porter, the 4-H-Club agent of Morris County, and both men agreed that taking care of Seeing Eye puppies would be a good 4-H project.

The 4-H clubs are an integral part of the Department of Agriculture's Cooperative Extension Service, a nationwide out-of-school educational service. Whenever they want up-to-date agricultural information, farmers and 4-H members can avail themselves of the pooled knowledge of the USDA and state agricultural colleges. The 4-H program is designed to encourage youngsters into agricultural careers, but it places equal stress on good citizenship and community service. The youngsters learn about farming or homemaking by doing such projects as actual tractor maintenance, raising their own corn or strawberries, cooking, caring for infants.

After working out details of the project with Seeing Eye, Porter set about finding his first group of puppy-raisers. It wasn't easy. There weren't many German shepherds in the country then, and the breed had an undeservedly bad reputation. Shepherds are work dogs, and many of them had been trained for police work and guard duty. They did their work well and were widely publicized as "police dogs" who showed no mercy to wrongdoers. People unfamiliar with them assumed they were vicious.

On February 11, 1942, after visiting many homes and doing a lot of proselytizing for German shepherds, Porter loaded six puppies in his car and delivered them to six Morris County 4-H'ers. Five of them—Glenroy Stroud, Jerry and Jack Spargo, William Terhune and Louis Guerin—took excellent care of their dogs and raised several more apiece in ensuing years. The sixth youngster had to be dropped almost immediately. He took his responsibilities lightly and permitted his dog to run off. The dog was shot by a stranger.

The program expanded quickly, first to Hunterdon County, then to other neighboring communities. Today the puppies are being raised by 4-H members in nine New Jersey counties—Morris, Sussex, Somerset, Middlesex, Monmouth, Passaic, Mercer, Hunterdon and Warren.

The Seeing Eye project today is essentially what it was when Bob Porter placed his first six dogs. The 4-H member receives his puppy when it is about ten weeks old and gives it back when it is about fourteen months old. A new puppy is usually delivered on the same day that the grown dog is picked up. Seeing Eye pays the youngsters ten dollars a month toward the keep of the dog and pays all veterinary bills. The youngster is asked to train the dog to walk on leash and to teach it normal good behavior in the home, but nothing more. As in any 4-H project, the youngster keeps detailed records on his dog—an accounting of all money spent on rations, records of the dog's growth and health and the dates when the dog received its various inoculations. If the project has been completed satisfactorily and the youngster takes a second dog, he receives a silver medallion showing the 4-H clover-leaf insigne atop a dog's head, the official award of Seeing Eye and the New Jersey Extension Service. Annually, Seeing Eye plays host at a picnic at Morristown in honor of all the 4-H'ers who have raised puppies in that year. At this time the youngsters get a chance to watch the dogs training with blind students. Some of them even see their former pets.

Within a day or so of collecting a dog, Bob Curtis always writes a letter to the 4-H family, thanking them for their valuable contribution to the work of Seeing Eye. Later he sends reports of the dog's progress in training and, when the dog finally leaves the school with its blind master, he writes to the family again, telling them something like, "The dog you raised is now serving as a guide for a blind newsstand dealer in California." The 4-H'ers never learn the names of the recipients of their dogs. They seem satisfied just to know that their dog has worked out and is doing a useful job somewhere.

At least once every six or eight weeks Curtis or the county agent visits each 4-H home. During each visit Curtis checks the dog's health, tests its sensitivity to noise and handling, evaluates its "self right"—a sense of emotional security. He concentrates on bringing out the most desirable traits in each dog, but it is inevitable that some get weeded out. A chronically sick dog, for instance, wouldn't be of any use to a blind person. Curtis, John Weagley and G. William Debetaz, often aided by veterinarians, pool their experience and knowledge in lengthy consultations about the possible elimination of a pup. When such a decision is reached, they are confident that they have acted in the best interests of the blind students at the school.

Because of careful breeding, high standards in the acquisition of outside dogs and the good care they get at the 4-H homes, most of the puppies pass the training course. Yet, on the occasions when a dog is weeded out, the youngster who raised it needs comforting. Curtis, who has worked for Seeing Eye for more than seven years, is a good man to explain the necessity for Seeing Eye's decision. By the time he finishes describing the difficulties a blind person would have with an unstable or unhealthy dog, he usually has the youngster with him all the way.

Puppies will be puppies, even if they will eventually do guide work, and it is not unusual for the 4-H members to have occasional problems with their dogs chasing and sometimes killing chickens or ducks. Such matters are easily settled. In early 1953, though, four pedigreed sheep were killed near Princeton, and three Seeing Eye pups were accused of the deed. The 4-H program in that area might have suffered a severe setback but for the support that was given by the 4-H parents.

The puppies had been placed in two homes about a half mile apart. Between these homes was the property of a sheep breeder. One morning the breeder found that four of his sheep had been killed by dogs. But which ones? The ground was bare and frozen; there were no tracks to follow. Pending further investigation, the carcasses were left in the outdoor pens where they had been found. That night it snowed. In the morning the breeder found dog tracks near the dead sheep and followed them to the homes of both of his 4-H neighbors. The police were called and the mouths of the puppies were examined. In the back teeth of all the dogs there were shreds of sheep wool.

The parents of the 4-H'ers argued that wool in the teeth of the dogs did not necessarily indicate guilt. After all, the sheep had been lying outdoors for twenty-four hours. The puppies could have come upon the carcasses long after some other dog had done the actual killing.

The parents had to choose between paying for the sheep or taking the issue to court. To avoid the latter, which might have resulted in unfavorable publicity for the 4-H program, a settlement was worked out with the breeder. All three puppies, incidentally, are now working with the blind. The two families that were involved in the sheep incident are still raising puppies.

A dog doesn't require blue-blooded parents in order to qualify as a candidate for guide work. About a year and a half ago, four pooches of undetermined heritage were left at the doorstep of the school's kennels. Bob Curtis placed them temporarily with Bonnie Letcher, of Morris County, who'd then raised six puppies for Seeing Eye. After a month, Curtis weeded out three of the pooches—he and Bonnie found homes for them—and transferred the fourth, Tippy, to the care of Carolyn Litts, of Johnsonburg. As the dog grew older it shaped up as a good prospect for guide work. Tippy was assigned to a blind man early this summer.

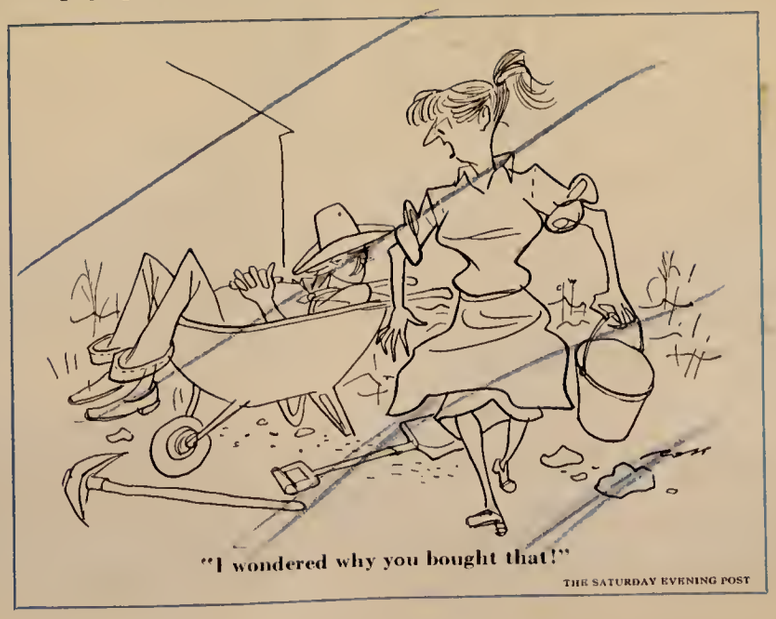
In another case, Seeing Eye was offered some pedigreed dogs, but was initially reluctant to accept them. Late in 1952, a pilot for Pan American World Airways named Carl Buettner, who had been breeding boxers in Rio de Janeiro, wrote that he wanted to donate seven pups to the school. Seeing Eye was grateful, but they told Buettner they didn't want him to go to the trouble of sending them all the way to the United States when there was a chance that some of them might have to be rejected. Buettner's faith in his boxers was unshakable. He said he'd fly the pups to Idlewild Airport, in New York, on one of his regular flights, if Seeing Eye would send someone to meet him and inspect the dogs.

Shortly thereafter, Curtis met Buettner's plane at Idlewild. The puppies looked promising and Curtis accepted them with thanks. He placed them in seven different homes in Sussex and Middlesex counties. Buettner returned to Rio de Janeiro to await further news.

The reports he got were excellent. The boxers all did well at their foster homes. They were collected at the same time, all entered training together and all were in the same graduating class.

Today, like the more than 1000 other Seeing Eye dogs that spent their formative months in the homes of New Jersey families, the seven boxers are working as guides. Raising these puppies is a big responsibility, and it puts many demands on the youngsters. To someone not familiar with the 4-H spirit, it might appear as if these boys and girls are not getting a fair return for the love and attention they give the puppies. The 4-H'ers don't see it that way. Being able to use their heads, hearts and hands in helping provide "eyes" for the blind is reward enough for them.

THE END



"I wondered why you bought that!"

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

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